

## REMARKS

The present application amends claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11-14, 17 and 18, leaves claims 3, 9 and 15 unchanged and cancels claims 4, 10 and 16. Therefore, the present application has pending claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's indication in paragraph 7 of the Office Action that the August 29, 2000 Information Disclosure Statement has been partially considered. Applicants are now in the process of preparing a concise explanation of the relevance of the reference not considered by the Examiner. Such will be filed once completed.

The drawings stand objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(4) being that the Examiner alleges that the reference numeral 1703 has been used to designate two elements. Filed on even date herewith are Proposed Drawing Corrections so as to identify the house as reference numeral 1701 and to identify the room as reference numeral 1703. Therefore, this objection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as the invention. Various amendments were made to claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18 so as to bring them into conformity with the requirements of 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Therefore, Applicants submit that this rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Specifically, amendments were made to claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 18 to overcome the objections noted by the Examiner in paragraphs 9-13 of the Office Action.

The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' Attorney by telephone should any further indefinite matter be discovered so that appropriate amendments may be made.

Claims 1-18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Smith (article entitled "The Contract Net Protocol: High-Level Communication and Control in a Distributed Problem Solver", by Reid G. Smith). As indicated above, claims 4, 10 and 16 were canceled. Therefore, this rejection with respect to claims 4, 10 and 16 is rendered moot. This rejection with respect to the remaining claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18 is traversed for the following reasons. Applicants submit that the features of the present invention as now recited in claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18 are not taught or suggested by Smith whether taken individually or in combination with any of the other references of record. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Amendments were made to each of independent claims 1, 7 and 13 so as to more clearly recite that the present invention is directed to a inter-device cooperative control method and system having a plurality of devices each including a communication function with communicates with another of the devices. According to the present invention each of the devices is provided with functional information including at least one of information on a function processed by a device and information on a function to be performed on the device, environmental information

on the environment in which the device is located and status information which indicates the progress of at least one of a process performed by the device and a process performed on the device. Information is obtained on a process to be performed by the devices or on a process to be performed on the devices. The obtaining of this information can be performed by an arbitrary one of the devices. Further, according to the present invention, a process to be performed by the devices or a process to be performed on the devices is determined based on the obtained information and the functional, environmental and status information. This process of determining a process to be performed by or on the devices is performed by an arbitrary device.

According to the present invention, at least one of the devices is movable and the environmental information includes position information indicating a position of the device. When the position information is changed based on movement of the movable device, the movable device broadcasts the changed position information to the other devices.

The above described features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims are not taught or suggested by any of the references of record particularly Smith whether taken individually or in combination with each other.

Smith is merely directed to a system having a manager and a plurality of contractors wherein each contractor is connected via the manager and the manager manages the distribution of tasks and performs negotiation processes between the contractors. Thus, the system taught by Smith is specifically related to providing for distributed problem solving in a decentralized and loosely coupled environment.

At no point is there any teaching or suggestion in Smith of the above described features of the present invention wherein an inter-device cooperative control method and system is provided so as to allow for the interactive cooperation between a plurality of devices each of which has a communication function and communicates with the other devices. The intention of the present invention is to allow for devices to operate, for example, in a home such as that illustrated in Fig. 17 wherein the devices can be freely movable relative to each other. As per the present invention, if the devices are freely movable, then it is necessary for each of the devices to monitor the movement of the other devices relative to each other and to know the functions that can be performed by or on the other devices installed in the home. These features of the present invention are clearly not taught or suggested by Smith.

Specifically, Smith fails to teach or suggest that at least one of the plurality of devices is movable as recited in the claims.

Further, Smith fails to teach or suggest that the environmental information of the environment used by each device includes position information indicating a position of a device in the environment as recited in the claims.

Still further, Smith fails to teach or suggest that when the position information is changed based on movement of the at least movable device, the at least one movable broadcasts the changed position information to the other devices as recited in the claims.

Thus, as is quite clear from the above, Smith fails to teach or suggest numerous features of the present invention now more clearly recited in the claims.

Therefore, Smith does not anticipate nor render obvious the features of the features of the present invention as now more clearly recited in the claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC §102(b) rejection of claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18 as being anticipated by Smith is respectfully requested.

The remaining references of record have been studied. Applicants submit that they do not supply any of the deficiencies noted above with respect to the reference utilized in the rejection of claims 1-18.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-3 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early allowance of claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17 and 18 is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, '1' or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (501.41891X00).

Respectfully submitted,

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